

Message Text

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46

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6942

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

USUN NEW YORK 323

AMCONSUL BELIZE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEETING BETWEEN GUATEMALAN AND MEXICAN PRESIDENTS

1. FOLLOWING INAUGURATION OF A BRIDGE LINKING GUATEMALA AND MEXICO, PRESIDENTS LAUGERUD AND ECHEVERRIA MET MORNING OF MAY 31 IN COATEPEQUE, GUATEMALA AND IN AFTERNOON IN PUERTO MADERO, MEXICO. JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER MEETINGS SAID TWO PRESIDENTS HAD AGREED THAT CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES REPRESENTED "BEST PATH TO REACH A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER IN WHICH SPIRIT OF EQUITY AND JUSTICE PREVAILS BETWEEN NATIONS." THE CHIEFS OF STATE RECONFIRMED THEIR SUPPORT FOR 22-MILE MARITIME ECONOMIC ZONE AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN CREATION OF "A LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM" (SELA). THE PRESIDENTS ANNOUNCED THAT THEIR FOREIGN MINISTERS HAD SIGNED AN AGREEMENT FOR THE PROTECTION AND RESTITUTION OF ARCHEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS AND THAT JOINT

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COMMISSION WOULD STUDY MEANS FOR COOPERATION IN

USUMACINTA RIVER BASIN. ECHEVERRIA AND LAUGERUD AGREED TO SEEK WAYS OF REDUCING THE TRADE IMBALANCE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES (NOW 10:1 IN FAVOR OF MEXICO) AND TO COOPERATE IN PETROLEUM INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT (I.E., IN GUATEMALA).

2. LOCAL PRESS GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO ECHEVERRIA'S COMMENTS ON BELIZE DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE ON COATEPEQUE. EL IMPARCIAL, WHOSE REPORTER QUEZZED THE MEXICAN PRESIDENT ON THE ISSUE, WAS THE NEWSPAPER TO QUOTE ECHEVERRIA AS SAYING THAT "ASIDE FROM ANY POSSIBLE MEXICAN CAIM, WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION WITHIN MEXICO," MEXICO PREFERRED, FOR THE SAKE OF ITS FRIENDSHIP WITH GUATEMALA, NOT TO INTERVENE IN THE TALKS BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND GREAT BRITAIN. ALL PAPERS QUOTED ECHEVERRIA AS EXPRESSING HOPE THAT THE GUATEMALAN PEOPLE'S DEMANDS WOULD BE ATTENDED SATISFACTORILY, "IN CONFORMITY WITH HISTORY, REASON AND LAW." (COMMENT: INCOMPLETE REPORTING MAY GIVE MANY GUATEMALANS IMPRESSION THAT MEXICO HAS RENOUNCED ITS INTEREST IN BELIZE ISSUE, BUT GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT FULLY UNDERSTANDS PROBLEM OF MEXICAN CLAIMS. END COMMENT.)

3. GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO HAVE MADE SPECIAL POINT OF EXPRESSING RECOGNITION OF MEXICO'S EFFORTS TO EXERCISE THIRD WORLD LEADERSHIP. IN WELCOMING ECHEVERRIA TO GUATEMALA, LAUGERUD RECOGNIZED THE "TRANSCENDENTAL IMPORTANCE" OF MEXICO'S INITIATIVE IN PROPOSING THE ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES CHARTER AND EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY WITH THE TLATELOLCO TREATY TO PROHIBIT NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA. GOG'S OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER PRAISED ECHEVERRIA AS "LEADER OF WORLD MOVEMENT" AND PRINTED ENTIRE TEXT OF THE ECONOMIC RIGHTS CHARTER. HOWEVER, THESE ARE MORE EVIDENCE OF GUATEMALAN INTEREST IN MAKING THE APPROPRIATE GESTURES TO MEXICO THAN THEY ARE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN GUATEMALAN FOREIGN POLICY.

4. PRIOR TO THE MEETING OF PRESIDENTS, GUATEMALAN OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED PUBLICLY GOG'S INTEREST IN FINDING SOME WAY TO IMPROVE GUATEMALA'S TERMS OF TRADE WITH MEXICO. CURSORY MANNER IN WHICH THAT ISSUE WAS MENTIONED IN THE COMMUNIQUE WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT LITTLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROGRESS WAS MADE ON THAT SCORE. ECHEVERRIA SUMMED UP THE PROBLEM WELL IN HIS REPORTED REPLY TO A GUATEMALAN REPORTER: "NO ONE BUYS WHAT NO ONE WANTS TO BUY."
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